



Nashua Region Complete Streets Advisory Committee

Meeting Notes

3/5/2024

NRPC Conference Room

Attendees:

Levent Akinci, City of Nashua	Tyrel Borowitz, NRPC
Nelson Disco, Town of Merrimack	Ned Connell, NRPC
Marina Vaz, Conservation Law Foundation (via Zoom)	Emma Rearick, NRPC
	Matt Waitkins, NRPC

Call to Order and Introductions

E. Rearick called the meeting to order at 12:10pm and attendees introduced themselves.

Bike and Ped Data Collection Program – Interactive Map Demonstration

T. Borowitz showed the new bike and pedestrian count viewer map on the screen

(<https://nashuarpc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/1ca13ac2b72b49d8987cbeba6da476a8>)

He demonstrated some of the features of the map, including looking at count locations, historic data, and trends, and pointed out that Amherst now has two permanent counters along Amherst St. N. Disco asked about audience, and why haven't there been any counts in Merrimack. T. Borowitz explained it is town staff, interested public, conservation commissions, etc. who may be planning projects or looking at how many people are using sidewalks or trails. Anyone can request a count and NRPC will see if it is possible with the counting equipment that we have. The movable counters must be attached to a pole or tree, facing away from any vehicle traffic and towards pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Last year he set up a count in Watson Park in Merrimack, but it captured car traffic in addition to bike/ped traffic. He will be trying different locations this year. L. Akinci asked if the counters can differentiate between a bike and a scooter, because the city will be deploying Bird scooters again this year. T. Borowitz explained that when the tubes are used with the counters, they identify bicycles based on wheelbase length and they can't specifically identify scooters. If anyone would like to request a count, they can fill out a form on the NRPC website or contact T. Borowitz.

NH Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment

E. Rearick briefly summarized the NH Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment, noting that the state had released it in November 2023 and it was just presented at the February NRPC TTAC meeting. She pointed out that it explains how bike/ped data counts are necessary to calculate bike/ped crash rates. It also shows that crashes in rural areas are more likely to be fatal or severe due to high vehicle speeds and lack of bike/ped accommodations. It is a good document to reference and helps justify why improvements may be necessary.

MPO Complete Streets Policy

E. Rearick explained how NRPC staff have pivoted from creating complete streets guidelines to drafting a complete streets policy for the Nashua MPO. NRPC functions as the Nashua MPO. It is important to look internally to the organization to see what can be done as an organization. The MPO helps coordinate and review certain transportation projects, including those proposed for the state Ten Year Plan, Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding, and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. The

MPO does not look at all the projects in all thirteen communities, it does not build roads, etc. so it will look and function differently than a municipal complete streets policy. Adopting a policy could help the MPO evaluate and rank the projects they do look at. E. Rearick said she has been using guidelines from Smart Growth America and looking at policies that they have identified as good policies. She then shared the first two sections of the draft, the vision and definition sections for feedback. She will also email it out for feedback.

FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Amendment 4

M. Waitkins provided context on the three main transportation planning documents the MPO maintains, including: the Long Range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (long range plan); the NH Ten Year Plan, which includes all projects that use either federal or state funding; and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is the first four years of the Ten Year Plan. The planning process is long and can be complicated, and sometimes it takes hearing it a few times to make sense.

TIP Amendment 4 is the fourth amendment to the current TIP. As projects get built, delayed, enter different phases etc., the plan needs to be adjusted with amendments. TIP Amendment 4 includes adding a couple of Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) projects, projects that demonstrably improve air quality, often by moving motor vehicles off the road. Two CMAQ projects that are being added into the TIP with this amendment, that pertain to complete streets, include a pedestrian bridge in Wilton and a side path in Amherst. The projects had been chosen through the most recent CMAQ grant process and this amendment adding them into the TIP makes them official, which is good news.

M. Waitkins added that soon the MPO is entering into the next round of updating the Ten Year Plan, and that process will include communities proposing projects. It is a competitive process because the final list of projects is fiscally constrained, so the project list will be limited to what can be paid for. The projects are usually 80% federally funded and 20% funded by a local match from the town or city. The scoring and prioritization process is one that would be impacted by an MPO complete streets policy.

Statewide, Regional, Local Updates

Statewide:

E. Rearick reported that NHDOT has begun drafting a statewide complete streets policy. The NHDOT CSAC is providing feedback on that policy. We will see when or if they ask for broader feedback. As M. Waitkins mentioned, the Ten Year Plan process is going to happen this spring and summer, so it is a good time to prepare project ideas and proposals.

Regional:

N. Connell shared that the Nashua MPO has teamed up with the other three southern NH MPOs and hired a consultant to draft a Safe Streets for All Safety Plan. Once the consultant completes the safety plan, the Nashua region communities will be eligible to apply for federal Safe Streets for All infrastructure funding, which would be available earlier than funding from the Ten Year Plan. This future funding opportunity will be a good one for this group. The consultants will be conducting outreach as part of drafting the plan, so we will let you know about opportunities to get involved. The goal is to have the plan done by next January to be eligible for the next round of infrastructure funding in summer 2025.

Local:

Merrimack: N. Disco shared that two bridges across the F.E. Everett Turnpike will be replaced before the turnpike is widened. The Baboosic Lake Road bridge will include sidewalks on both sides, where there is currently a sidewalk on only one side, and the new Wire Road bridge will include a sidewalk on one side, where there are currently none.

Nashua: L. Akinci shared that Nashua is looking at their own complete streets policy. The Bird rental scooters will be coming soon, and they are currently looking at re-introducing a bike share program and how to mitigate issues from last time when bikes were strewn around in the canal and other places.

Other Business

There was no other business.

Adjourn:

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 1pm.

Next Meeting

To be determined, likely May or June.